

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 01995 030238Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 COME-00 L-03 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 /032 W
-----082618 030242Z /65
R 311030Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8702

UNCLAS DACCA 1995

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS : EWWT, BG
SUBJECT : U.S. FLAG VESSEL "ARTHUR MIDDLETON"

REF: STATE 081365

1. IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BY WATERMAN'S AGENT IN DACCA D.A. LEES, EMBOFFS CALLED ON MARKETING DIRECTOR M. SYED OF THE BANGLADESH JUTE MILLS CORPORATION (BJMC) MARCH 30 BEFORE RECEIPT OF REFTEL TO DISCUSS INCIDENT CONCERNING WATERMAN'S VESSEL ARTHUR MIDDLETON.

2. SYED STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT THE LOADING ON THE BANGLADESH SHIPPING CORPORATION'S "BANGLAR PRAGOTI" OF CARGO DESIGNATED BY U.S. BUYERS FOR SHIPMENT ON THE ARUTHUR MIDDLETON WAS A MISTAKE. HE SAID BJMC HAS NO INTENTION OF DEVIATING FROM THE CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION TO LOAD CARGO ON VESSELS NOMINATED BY BUYERS AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THIS PRACTICE IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE HAS APOLOGIZED TO WATERMAN AND CABLED BJMC'S REGRETS OVER THIS INCIDENT TO THE SEVERAL U.S. BUYERS OF THE CARGO. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED, ACCORDING TO SYED, BECAUSE OF AN OVER-ZEALOUS SUBORDINATE AND PRESSURE FROM BANGLADESH SHIPPING COMPANY WHEN THE TEMPORARY DELAY OF THE ARTHUR MIDDLETON BECAUSE OF BRIEF REPAIRS IN CALCUTTA OFFERED A PRETEXT FOR THE BANGLAR PRAGOTI TO TAKE THE CARGO. HE SAID BOTH HE
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AND WATERMAN'S AGENT LEES WERE OUT OF TOWN ON THAT DAY AND IF THEY HAD BEEN IN DACCA THEY WOULD HAVE INTERVENED AND PREVENTED THIS MISHAP. HE ASSURED ME THAT IN THE FUTURE BJMC WILL HONOR THE VESSEL NOMINATED BY THE BUYER AND EMPHASIZED THE CORPORATION'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN BUYERS AND SHIPPING COMPANIES.

3. EMBASSY HAS JUST RECIVED FROM WATERMAN REPRESENTATIVE LEES A COPY OF A LETTER DATED MARCH 24 FROM CAPTAIN SHAFI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, BANGLADESH SHIPPING CORPORATION, ADDRESSED TO ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PORTS AND SHIPPING, URGING THAT BJMC GIVE PREFERENCE TO BSC VESSELS. SHAFI ASKS THAT THE GOVERNMENT URGE BJMC TO INSTRUCT U.S. BUYERS AND WATERMAN THAT BUYERS MAY NO LONGER NOMINATE SHIPPING LINES OF THEIR OWN CHOICE, OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, THAT BJMC CHANGE MODE OF SHIPPING FROM FOB TO CIF SO THAT BUYER HAS NO CONTROL OVER SHIPPING. HE ARGUES THAT SINCE "SELLERS MARKET" NOW EXISTS BJMC CAN "IMPOSE" NEW SYSTEM ON BUYERS, AND THAT UNLESS BSC GETS PROTECTION IT WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY STAYING IN THE TRADE.

4. ECONOFF IS SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PORTS AND SHIPPING, TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER IN VIEW OF PRESSURE FROM BSC TO CHANGE EXISTING PRACTICE TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF WATERMAN AND U.S. BUYERS.

SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CARGO HANDLING, ARTHUR MIDDLETON
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DACCA01995
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780143-0302
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978035/aaaaadma.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a560f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 81365
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3275564
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. FLAG VESSEL "ARTHUR MIDDLETON"
TAGS: EWWT, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a560f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014